

April 12, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2412A – Funding for ASPIRE, AVID, BUILD EXITO, CollegePossible & TRiO

Chair Co-Chair Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair Dan Rayfield, and Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner Hayway.

I'm writing you today to urge you support and fund HB 2412A. This bill provides funding for five different college access programs that were funded in the Governor's Recommend Budget. These programs provide valuable access and support for students from low-income backgrounds, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and first-generation college students to help them achieve their post-secondary goals.

As an educator with over 28 years experience serving young people, I am overjoyed to find out Oregon is exploring this bill to support our young people! I work for TRiO in a program that serves students in alternative education settings. My students face incredible barriers to a college education including homelessness, the foster system, incarceration, learning challenges, holes in their education, mental health, etc. They all possess determination and a multitude of learned survival skills to make them successful in college and life.

This bill would help us in this time where even students with few barriers are struggling to get to college. Our vulnerable students need us more than ever.

There is nothing better in my profession than connecting with a TRiO alumni who is happy in a career, contributing to their community, and living their potential. Our college and career access programs work!

I strongly urge the committee to pass and fund HB 2412A.

Sincerely,
Lori Thompson
TRiO College Advocate